

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

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Claims 1-15 - cancel without prejudice.

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16. (New) Method of drying photo resist layers comprising exposing in a deaerated chamber at least one substrate with a photo resist layer applied thereon to IR radiation from an IR radiation source whose power is controllable, measuring temperature or a temperature-dependent parameter in a vicinity of said photo resist layer, and controlling the power of said IR radiation source on a basis of the temperature or the temperature-dependent parameter measured in such a way that a predetermined development of temperature versus time occurs during drying, wherein said predetermined development of the temperature versus time is selected so that the temperature is initially constant and then undergoes a linear, step-shaped or ramp-shaped increase throughout the drying.

17. (New) Method according to claim 16, wherein the temperature is measured underneath said substrate.

18. (New) Method according to claim 16, wherein the temperature of an area containing said photo resist layer is measured from an upper side of said photo resist layer by a pyrometer.

19. (New) Method according to claim 16, wherein the predetermined development of the temperature versus time is initially experimentally established for each new

combination of materials of said photo resist layer and said substrate.

20. (New) Method according to claim 16, wherein a quantity or concentration of solvents is detected in air issuing from said deaerated chamber, and when the quantity or the concentration of solvents drops below a predetermined limit, completion of the drying is initiated by down-control of the power of said IR radiation source.

21. (New) Method according to claim 16, wherein the IR radiation source has a maximum IR radiation within a range of from 1 to 3  $\mu\text{m}$ .

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CONT.  
22. (New) Method according to claim 16, further comprising moving a plurality of said at least one substrate in a rotary movement about an axis in the deaerated chamber to dry simultaneously said plurality of said at least one substrate, and controlling the temperature measurement in a timed manner so that for each passage of one substrate of said plurality through a measuring field wherein the temperature is measured, a measurement is performed.

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